

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-24 were pending in the application and were rejected in the Office Action. By way of this amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1-3, 7-10, 12-19, and 21-23, without adding new matter. Accordingly, claims 1-24 are respectfully resubmitted for further consideration.

Rejection of Claims 1-24

Claims 1-24 were rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2, for a formalistic reason. By way of this amendment, Applicants have obviated an apparent confusion regarding the use of the word "above" in independent claims 1, 8, 9, 13, 14, and 21, *i.e.*, the claims to which the Examiner specifically objected. In addition, Applicants made similar changes to dependent claims 2, 10, 15, and 22. In light of these amendments, the rejection is now moot and, therefore, should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

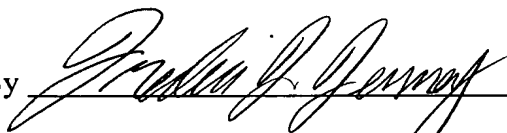
For the aforementioned reasons, claims 1-24 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date **DEC 14 2004**

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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HERewith, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HERewith, APPLICANT HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.